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ABSTRACT

Traditionally, student teaching programs have used a triad supervision model which involves the student teacher, the school-based cooperating teacher, and the university-based supervisor. However, the professional literature recognizes deficiencies in this model. This paper describes an alternative student teacher supervision model which teams Clinical Master Teachers (CMTs) who combine the traditional roles of the cooperating teacher and the college supervisor. The experiences of three secondary social studies teachers participating in the first year of such a program are examined, and the changes these teachers made in their supervision and professional development are explored through case study methodology. Results indicated that participation in the CMT program seemed to empower and raise the confidence of the three teachers regarding supervision. Formerly, cooperating teachers saw college supervisors as "outsiders"; as CMTs they were more accessible to their interns and were able to function as team members, providing better lines of communication with interns. The CMTs felt that university resources are used more effectively in the CMT program than in the traditional triad. Contains 19 references. (PB)

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Clinical Master Teachers:

A Different Approach to Supervision

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ABSTRACT

Traditionally, student teaching programs have used a triad supervision model which involves the student teacher, the school-based cooperating teacher, and the university-based supervisor. However, the professional literatures recognizes deficiencies in this model. This paper describes an alternative model to supervision which teams Clinical Master Teachers who combine the traditional roles of the cooperating teacher and the college supervisor. Specifically, this paper will examine three social studies teachers as they participated in their first year of the program and the changes these teachers made in their supervision as well as their own professional development.

Clinical Master Teachers: A Different Approach to the Supervision of Student Teachers

In recent years, researchers have examined the student teaching experience or teacher internship. While some studies (e.g., Adler, 1982; Johnston, 1990; Wilson & Readence, 1993) have concluded that a variety of factors (e.g., cooperating teacher, intern biography, methods instruction) have an impact on the beginning teacher, rarely is the college supervisor mentioned as an influential factor in this development. Subsequently, national commissions have recommended the development of programs that would create cadres of teachers who would combine the two roles of cooperating teacher and college supervisor into one known as the "clinical master teacher" (Carnegie Task Force, 1986; The Holmes Group, 1990). This study will examine the evolution of three secondary social studies teachers as they participate in the first year of such a program. Specifically, using case study methodology, we will explore the changes these teachers made in their supervision as well as their own professional development.

Review of the Literature

The importance of the student teaching experience in the preparation of new teachers has been well-documented by researchers in teacher education (Brimfield & Leondard, 1983; Lortie, 1975). This has been supported by inservice teachers, who, when reflecting on their preparation, generally describe student teaching as the most influential component of their preparation (Clark, Smith, Newby & Cook, 1985). Despite the impact of the student teaching experience, it is roundly criticized for a variety of deficiencies. These criticisms include the lack of an explicit curriculum during the student teaching experience which is described by Stones (1984) as an apprenticeship "where good teaching is to be caught and not taught." Another criticism of this component in the teacher preparation process is the lack of integration with university coursework (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1989). For instance, in many cases, when discrepancies occurred between the perspectives of the cooperating teacher and the university faculty, the pedagogical knowledge of the university faculty was supplanted by that of the cooperating teacher (Palonsky & Jacobson, 1988; Zevin, 1974). The uneven quality of supervision provided by the traditional triad is also seen as a major weakness of the teacher internship (Zeichner, 1990).

Traditional supervision. Research in teacher education which has examined the traditional role of the college supervisor as part of a triad (cooperating teacher--teacher intern--college supervisor) has concluded that, despite the huge resources invested in supervision by the university, college supervisors appear to be rather ineffective in their roles (Boydell, 1986). Although supervisors contribute to the smooth operation of student teaching and serve as effective liaisons between the university and placement sites (Tabachnick, Popkewitz, & Zeichner, 1980; Zeichner, 1980), the supervisor is largely viewed as ineffective because: (a) the college supervisor spends a small amount of time in the classroom and may be thought of as a visitor to the classroom and school rather than a supervisor, (b) the supervisor may not be able to effectively combine assessment and support, (c) interns tend to mistrust the evaluation of the supervisor, particularly when that evaluation is different from that of the cooperating teacher, and (d) the supervisor frequently fails to make the important theory-practice connection. As a result, a number of alternative approaches to the traditional triad have been proposed Boydell (1986).

One such approach suggests that before teacher education can have an influence on the preservice teacher, the schools must change. Emans (1983) suggests that the supervisors "main influence would be on the cooperating teacher, and indirectly, on the school environment" (p. 16). Similar to recent efforts which have been made in teacher education to "bridge the gap" between university-based faculty and school-based faculty by forming school-university partnerships (Cornbeth & Ellsworth, 1994), this program would allow college supervisors to work in a supportive rather than dominant role (Kagan & Tippins, 1993). Subsequently, the cooperating teacher would become a member of a cohort of teachers, or clinical master teachers, and would assume responsibility for supervising teacher interns in the field while the university supervisor would continue to serve as a liaison for the university but would work in a staff development capacity for the classroom teachers. Further, the clinical master teachers would collaborate with university professors as they plan the curriculum of teacher education programs (Cornbeth & Ellsworth, 1994; Kagan & Tippins, 1993).

This paper will focus on the development of such a program, the Clinical Master Teacher (CMT) Program, by investigating the perceptions and practices of three social studies teachers during their first year in this program.

Description of the Clinical Master Teacher (CMT) Program. At the University of Alabama, CMTs, viewed to be outstanding teachers and supervisors, are selected to participate in this alternative supervisory program at the elementary, middle school, and secondary levels. CMTs fulfill the traditional roles of both the campus-based supervisor and the school-based cooperating teacher. The CMTs are grouped in teams consisting of four to six member and work cooperatively in the supervision of a group of teacher interns assigned to the entire team. While each CMT has primary responsibility for one or two assigned interns each semester, all CMTs are encouraged to work with all interns assigned to the team through observations, critique of intern planning and classroom instruction, and other professional activities such as intern seminars.

CMTs are carefully screened and selected for this program. Each teacher must meet the following criteria: (a) five years teaching experience, (b) a minimum of three semesters as a successful cooperating teacher, (c) evidence of participation in professional activities (e.g., presentations at professional meetings, staff development presentations, service/leadership in the school/school system, (d) recommendation by the principal, (e) review by a panel which includes school-based and university-based members, and (f) approval by the university faculty.

Appointed as school-based faculty to the College of Education, CMTs are entitled to all University benefits awarded to adjunct faculty. Each CMT is responsible for assigning the teacher internship grade to the assigned intern(s). The fact that the CMT holds faculty status makes the grade assignment responsibility legal under University regulations and Alabama law. As adjunct faculty members, CMTs are appointed for the full academic year and must be reappointed for each succeeding year. Each CMT is paid $250.00 for supervising each full time intern. The total cost of the program is about the same as supervision by graduate students or adjunct faculty, but is consdierably lower than supervision by fulltime faculty members.

Campus-based faculty assigned to the CMT program work with the CMTs and CMT teams in the supervision of the interns. Currently, there is a coordinator for the elementary program and a coordinator for middle/high school programs. Program assistants have been hired for each program to assist each coordinator. Under the traditional triad model, a faculty member was assigned the responsibility of supervising approximately five teacher interns and this supervisory load was equal to a three semester hour course (0.25 FTE). Under the CMT model, the CMT coordinator does not supervise interns; rather, the CMT coordinator will work with CMT teams and individual CMTs. CMT coordinators work with 20 to 30 CMTs for the equivalent of one three semester hour course.

Once selected, CMTs participate in a training program with the CMT coordinators which provides the teachers with opportunities for team building, enhancing supervisory techniques, and professional development opportunities. Team members are responsible for assisting each other in supervision of the interns. This allows the teacher intern to receive evaluations from more than one person and helps the CMT if problems arise. In this program, CMT teams meet biweekly to discuss the supervision process and the teacher interns. The university CMT coordinator joins these meetings to be kept informed about the program. Furthermore, once a month the CMTs hold a staff development meeting for the teacher interns. Another teacher intern meeting is scheduled by the coordinator so that the teacher interns have an opportunity to discuss problems that they might not feel comfortable discussing with the CMTs. During each school year, joint university-based and school-based faculty meetings are held to share ideas and discuss important issues.

Method

Participants

The participants in this study were three secondary social studies teachers (one African American female, one white female, one white male) at a suburban high school in the southeastern United States. They worked together as a cohort during their first year as CMTs. The subjects taught by the teachers include: AP world history, economics, government, law and society, and US history. One teacher is the social studies chair; all three teachers are extremely involved with extracurricular activities (e.g., Scholar Bowl, National Honor Society, soccer team). The participants of this study were part of a

larger cohort of teachers, but chose to form a team based partly on content field specialty and partly on geographical location of classrooms.

Procedure

The major part of this study was conducted over a period of two semesters, with data collected by two of the researchers. During the first semester, the three teachers formed one of two teams at their school. During the second semester, a home economics teacher who did not receive a student teacher during the first semester joined this CMT team.

During both semesters, one of the researchers served as the CMT coordinator for this school. Her involvement included: (a) attending the team's biweekly meetings, (b) leading monthly meetings with the student teachers, (c) working with the CMTs when problems arose, and (d) soliciting input from the teachers for the teacher education program. Minutes of biweekly meetings, correspondence, formal observations, and observation records were collected.

At the conclusion of the school year, two of the researchers conducted a lengthy interview with the CMTs. This in-depth interview focused on: (a) the function of the CMT team, (b) the CMT's relationship with the university faculty, (c) the positive and negative aspects of the CMT program as a whole, and (d) their views of social studies education.

Data sources and analysis . Data sources included: (a) teacher intern evaluation forms used prior to and during their first year in the CMT program, (b) team documentation (e.g., objectives, team meeting minutes), and (c) an in-depth interview used to probe their views on social studies, supervision, and the CMT program. All data were analyzed for emerging patterns and trends using constant comparative analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1984). This analysis includes careful reading and rereading of all data by three members of the research team. To produce an accurate presentation of the research findings, as well as to control for researcher bias, data are triangulated across the three researchers and data sources.

Results

The data analyzed indicates that the teachers' roles as Clinical Master Teachers caused them to look at supervision and teaching in a different light. The following section describes the results of this study according to the major themes which emerged from the data.

The social studies teachers functioned well as a team. This result is consistent with the general climate of the school which is very collegial and supportive. The team set the following goals for its first year: (a) to provide interns with practical experiences throughout the curriculum, and (b) to prepare the interns for their role in the teaching profession by familiarizing the interns with the total school picture (e.g., paperwork, extracurricular activities), teaching interns to effectively plan lessons, (c) helping them develop good techniques for classroom management, and (d) encouraging them to have compassion for, empathy with and enjoyment of the students throughout the teaching process. To meet these goals the team planned to: (a) set up scheduled meetings on a variety of educational topics, (b) set up biweekly meetings so that the interns could discuss their impressions, observations, etc., (c) have formal team meetings, (d) provide for one on one discussions with the classroom teacher, (e) establish a schedule for teacher interns' observations throughout the school.

Participation in the CMT program seemed to empower and raise the confidence of these teachers regarding supervision. Part of this resulted from the added responsibilities placed on the CMT. Previously, as cooperating teachers, the teachers deferred to the university supervisor as the person most responsible for providing grades and evaluation. During the interview the CMTs stated:

> Before, you always had the other person...from the university that came out four times or whatever and watched and that was your grade. They could justify that and it seemed like the cooperating teacher was a little bit removed from the picture. But this---we're there everyday... they come in day one, they understand where their grade is coming from.

Further, another teacher explained: "Before I kept thinking well, the supervisor will catch it, but now I see that I've got to come along. It is easier to give helpful criticism." As a result of involvement with the program, the CMT stated: "I feel a lot more confident about the total responsibility for the grade. At first, I was a little anxious about it. "

Although, the CMTs formerly viewed the university supervisors as holders of positions of authority (e.g., providing grades), they did not consider them a member of the team or triad. It appeared that the supervisor was seen as an outsider and, at times, an adversary of the cooperating teacher and teacher intern. In discussing the differences between the university supervisor and cooperating teacher, one teacher explained: "The supervisor is not in the situation and does not know what is going on here; it is like being in an ivory tower coming down to the real world...When you step in from the outside, you don't have the entire picture we have...It may be that the teacher intern will have a conflict with one of us." The idea of conflict between the supervisor and cooperating teacher was further discussed. For example, one CMT stated: "You've got so many chiefs..." Another teacher explained: "They've got to please you, but they've also got to please that person." The CMTs commented that despite combining roles of the cooperating teacher and supervisor, the interns didn't see them as adversaries or "put us in the role of supervisor."

The CMTs further described the problems with the supervisor, one of which was accessibility: "It's hard to steal moments in the hall with a supervisor...I never really had an opportunity to sit down and talk. It is something that you really need to sit down and explain because if there was a comment that she made that you didn't understand, you really didn't have time to go over it...We are all here together and there is time either after school--we're just right here with each other." When asked if the elimination of the university supervisor created any problems, CMTs explained that they preferred the addition of the CMT Coordinator who "was much more at our convenience...rather than us fitting into a university schedule. Sometimes you (supervisor) can come and go and we have to live by the bell."

While the supervisors were not viewed as members of the team, the addition of the CMTs working as a team to supervise the interns was seen as an integral part of the supervisory experience. When comparing the traditional triad of supervision to the CMT model, one teacher stated: "I rarely talked to the supervisor but here because I had other people in the same situation with me if I said it was a bad day, how can I say this to her to make her better...it worked out a lot better. I had more support for myself." Echoing this sentiment, another teacher commented: "I really feel an integral part of all of this; I am not isolated." Regarding the notion of teamwork for the teacher interns, the CMTs explained

that the CMT program makes the "students become closer as a unit because you don't have English, social studies...it's just us and it's all of us."

An example of this teamwork occurred during the second semester when one of the interns was having problems in several areas (discipline, content knowledge). The CMTs worked together to develc a plan to assist him through the experience. Sensitive to the intern, they "didn't want to observe him too early because we wanted him to settle in and not be nervous..." They explained that "...we sort of formed prescriptive activities for him to try out." Then, as a team, the teachers observed, conferenced, and met with the intern frequently. According to team meeting minutes the CMTs "planned open discussions with him to point out his good qualities and show him how to deal more with the positive and less with the negative." According to the group, "we were able to offer different points of view which I think he was able to incorporate all of these into his teaching...I think he was much more confident...he told me at the end that he was really relaxed and enjoying it." Further, "with the comments that all of us were able to give that student teacher I think the teacher was prepared better because of it."

Another important theme the CMTs discussed concerned the quality of supervision that was provided for the teacher intern. The CMTs found that the CMT program necessitated better communication and feedback between CMTs and interns. This led to an appreciation for the role of the supervisor because now, the CMTs were solely responsible for communicating the positive and negative aspects of their performance with the interns. They also found that they had to address problem areas quickly and they "felt comfortable telling them that this didn't go so well. This time let's try this. Then if we tried it and it worked, I would say this worked much better. It was easier when it was down in black and white and you could go over it with that person." Another CMT explained that she learned that communication would be the key to success in her supervision. This led the CMT to state, "I told her that thirty minutes a day was ours. Regardless of what happens...That was one thing I wanted to make sure that I did--communicate...." However, the level of communications in written formal evaluations provided by CMTs showed little difference from their evaluations provided to interns before appointment as CMTs. The nature of their comments, the extent of those comments and the number of formal observations remained consistent. One shift was noted when comparing one teacher's evaluations prior

to and during the CMT experience--her evaluations written as a CMT seemed to be written for the teacher intern while her previous evaluations were more formal and appeared to exhibit a posturing for an audience other than the teacher intern (e.g., the university supervisor, Office of Clinical Experiences).

The CMTs also made contributions by critiquing the university's teacher education program. This included offering suggestions for curriculum change; these teachers were very concerned about the teacher intern's level of content knowledge. They felt that the comprehensive social science majors were not prepared to teach because they were only required to take a broad array of survey courses. The CMTs advocated the inclusion of upper level social science courses in their programs. Currently, the university faculty are considering changes in the requirements for social science majors, partly as a result of suggestions made by the CMTs.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to trace the development of three teachers as they became involved in the CMT Program. Because the selection criteria required the teachers to be exemplary and to contribute extensively to staff development programs and other school activities, little change was expected in these areas. However, the teachers' perceptions of their abilities were affected positively. These social studies teachers felt more respected by university professors and had a greater sense of their own expertise as they were able to fulfill the obligations required by the CMT Program, including setting goals and agendas for meetings, team supervision, and seminars for interns.

The CMTs supervision of the teacher interns was changed dramatically. They accepted full responsibility for supervision, including providing critiques and assigning the grade for the internship. Their commitment to helping the intern to succeed intensified. This was apparent in the increased frequency of their interactions with the intern and their heightened sensitivity to the needs and fears of the interns. While proof is lacking that this increased commitment actually contributed to the intern becoming a better teacher, it is reasonable to expect that result. Certainly, the CMTs thought they had done a better job of supervision than formerly, when they were part of a triad which included a college supervisor. Furthermore, the teacher interns expressed satisfaction with the supervision of the CMTs.

Overall, the findings substantiated previous research in supervision (Boydell, 1986) which suggested that university supervisors were perceived to be ineffective in many areas, including time available and accuracy of assessment. Although CMTs were critical of the university supervisor in the traditional triad, they viewed the university's role in the CMT Program as supportive and positive (Kagan & Tippins, 1993). This was due both to the coordinator's following the teacher's schedule (instead of the reverse) and the supportive, rather than dominant, role of the coordinator.

Moreover, the participants felt that university resources are used more effectively in the CMT Program than in the traditional triad. University staff work from semester to semester with the same CMTs. Thus, a continuing in-service program is provided to CMTs. Normally, university resources are spent on individual interns and dissipated. By continuing to work over several semesters with the same CMTs, a close working relationship is developing between them and the university professors. Over time, these social studies teachers are more likely to share the same philosophy as the university professors and become familiar with the teaching strategies stressed in the teacher preparation program. Often, teacher educators complain that they are not able to find a sufficient number of excellent teachers to work with interns. The CMT Program holds the possibility of providing a systematic means for the growth and professional development of outstanding teachers who work with interns. The close relationship between the CMTs and university professors may also broaden the professors' views of how theories and teaching strategies may best be implemented in today's classrooms.

While it is too early to ascertain the effects of the CMT program on the professional development of these social studies teachers, veteran CMTs at other schools are serving as instruments of change for their schools. For example, members of a CMT team at an elementary school have collaborated to establish multiage groupings in their classes. However, we do know that this process has strengthened the collegial relationships the teachers had at their school site. The CMT team served as a support mechanism for supervision and helped alleviate feelings of isolation so frequently felt by classroom teachers.

Future research should examine how the teacher interns in secondary social studies will be affected by the program. Other research should examine whether the theories and philosophies

espoused in the teacher education program will be reflected by the CMTs given the long term, in-depth relationship between the CMTs and social studies faculty at the university. Finally, research could explore other ways that this relationship might impact the preparation of social studies teachers (e.g., CMT involvement in the methods class).

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